

Helsingin yliopisto - Helsingfors universitet - University of Helsinki ID 2002-1760

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Työn nimi-Arbetets titel-Title The Relevance of Culture in Decision-Making; The Case of Estonia			
Oppiaine-Läroämne-Subject International Politics			
Työn laji-Arbetets art-Level Master's thesis		Aika-Datum-Month and year 2002-09-23	Sivumäärä-Sidantal-Number of pages 112
<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>The aim of this thesis is to look at how the cultural ideologies held by Estonian politicians may affect their manner of decision-making. Specifically, what influence does culture play when making decisions about the citizenship law. To successfully analyse the problem it was necessary to combine rational choice theory with cultural theory to produce a model that was simplistic in use, but comprehensive in scope. The reason for combining the two theories was the failure of both theories to adequately explain the role of preference formation, and hence decision-making. With its simplistic outlook cultural theory explains where preferences originate, but fails to systematically show how decisions are based on these preferences. Rational choice on the other hand shows how preferences affect decision-making, but fails to adequately explain where these preferences originate. Due to the fact that these two theories are seen as theoretically opposed, a theoretical bridge was essential. Discourse provided this theoretical connection and helped to bind the two theories into a coherent new model.</p> <p>Once the model had been formulated I applied it to the case study, namely Estonian politicians. After interviewing politicians and laypersons, it was observed that Estonia consists of two main ethnic groups, Estonian and a large Russian-speaking minority. Both of these ethnic groups had their own cultural ideologies, Estonians were deemed to be individualistic and the ethnic Russians collectivist. Using these two cultural ideologies as a foundation stone I applied the new model. In the latter part of the thesis I show how Estonian politicians, using the new model, make preferences and how these preferences limit decision-making possibilities.</p> <p>Finally, this thesis speculates on the influence and likely outcomes of decisions made by Estonian politicians. In addition, it looks at the consequences of these decisions on the large ethnic Russian minority, especially in the case of the citizenship law. The thesis then tentatively concludes that culture and political culture, through the role of discourse, alters and necessitates certain preferences, and hence decision-making.</p>			
Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords Cultural Theory Rational Choice Theory Discourse Preference Formation Estonia			
Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited			
Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information			